To the Committee on
Foreign Missions in
Princeton Theol. Seminary,

Oroomiah, June 25th 1844

Dear Brethren,

A few weeks ago I received a letter from Br. Wm J. Murphy, Secy of the Com. on For. Missions, in your Seminary, in which he solicits my correspondence. I hardly need say that the reception of this letter was to me a most agreeable circumstance. In addi-to the general interest I have long felt in your Seminary, as a nursery of Zion, I shall never forget the delightful impressions of hospitality & Christian communion in the hallowed atmosphere of your village - college & Theol. Seminary, which I received during my short visit with you; and I shall always love to have these impressions revived by receiving letters from you and writing you in return.

Your Secretary alludes to the serious disasters that have befallen the mountain Nestorians & solicits information. Those Nestorians are situated within the remote territorial limits of Turkey; though until within a short time, the Turkish government has exerted but a very limited influence, either over them, or the wild Koords among whom they dwell. About a year ago, the Koords subjugated those Nestorians, at the dictation of the Turkish government, committing serious slaughter as has been reported abroad. The extent of this slaughter has, however, been much over-rated, as it has been rumored abroad.

The Nestorians of Persia, among whom our mission is situated, are originally from the same people, with those of Koordista and they live in the western part of Persia, - in a province nearly contiguous to the country of the mountain Nestorians. They are, however, in a level, fertile country - are fixed in their habits - comparatively civilized - and in most respects, a distinct people and very different in character from the mountain Nestorians. Our Mission & the people among whom it is located, have nothing to fear from Koordish violence, being within the jurisdiction of Persia; nor have we much reason to apprehend interruption to our labors from the calamities that have befallen the mountain Nestorians. The English government is generously interesting itself for the relief of those mountaineers who have been overrun; and if, in connexion with its political measures for their relief, zealous English Puseyites should acquire a strong ascendency over that people, which they are anxious to do, they might thus ultimately extend the leaven of their exclusive policy to that portion of the Nestorians; though we trust not at present; and we devoutly pray that that troublesome heresy both in England and America may speedily be checked. I hardly need say, that so far as Puseyism effort or influence does, on these Eastern Churches, we have little more to hope from it than from Papacy. Hitherto, the effect of the troubles in Koordistan on our work has been to drive many of the wild mountaineers down within the range of the influence of our mission, & bring them within the hearing of the gospel; and we hope that great good may in this way result from the evils of their subjugation. The number of the Nestorians of Oroomiah, is nearly forty thousand; and in all parts of the mountains — scattered & collected in villages — wandering & stationary, there may be nearly one hundred thousand.

The Nestorians of Persia, as you are probably aware, are entirely accessible to our mission. We can as readily preach to the thirty or forty thousands of them in the province of Oroomiah as we could to like numbers in America. And it is the entire accessibleness of this people & their position in the heart of Asia — and not great numbers — that imparts to our missionary labors a deep and peculiar interest. We hope by the divine blessing on our labors, that this people will, in the course of years, become prepared to exert a commanding influence on surrounding regions and nations, in the diffusion of the light of the gospel.

Meanwhile, every thing in these countries betokens approaching political changes — and changes which, we believe, will greatly facilitate the spread of the gospel. The present year, for instance, is the one predicted, as it is said, ages ago by Muhammedan writers, as the one in which the present reign & dynasty in this country are to terminate and the empire pass into the hands of Christians. This subject is one of the most engrossing topics of conversation among the Persians; and the universal expectation of such changes is rapidly preparing the way for their actual occurrence. When changes of this kind shall occur is of course known only to him to whom belong the things which are not revealed; but our duty clearly is, to improve to the utmost the passing period, to prepare the Nestorians for such changes, — not that they may act the part of political revolutionizers, but become efficient almoners of the gospel when the way shall thus be effectually ~~prepared~~ opened for its unobstructed promulgation.

We have been much tried by the efforts of French Jesuits; but a few weeks ago they were ejected a second time from the country, at the instance of the Russian Ambassador. Fully on evil as these agents of the man of sin are set, however, we can hardly anticipate a long respite from their annoyances. Still, the Lord of Zion reigns, both in heaven and on earth, and we trust he will take care of his own blessed cause.

You will be glad to hear that Mar Yohannan is well and that he is doing a great and good work for the salvation of the Nestorians. He was much benefitted by his visit to America.

I found a larger number interested in missions in your Seminary, than in any other which I visited during my late visit in America. I hope the number interested in that, [illegible] in that hallowed institution, will never be less. How ins[illegible]bly important is it that the rising ministry all be imbued w[illegible] a missionary spirit — that they be ready & willing to go any where or do any thing, as the will of the Lord shall direct. The wants of the churches are evidently such as to require unqualified consecration in the ministry. What a battle is yet to be fought with Popery within our own borders! How anoyant is the spirit of High-churchism becoming in the land of the Pilgrims! And how much land remains to be possessed in the waste places of Zion on our constantly extending western borders! Especially desirable is it that there be a a life-spirit & activity in the ministry at home, which shall narrowly watch the interests of our American Zion at the outposts & suffer them not to be laid waste by the Enemy. And if such be the character of the ministry at home, we have in it a pledge that the heathen world will not be forgotten nor neglected — that men and means will not be wanting to bear the tidings of salvation to the hundreds of millions who are perishing for lack of vision — who are rapidly sinking in the darkness of temporal & eternal midnight. I marvel that there can be apathy in the churches and much more, in the ministry, on this affecting subject. Indeed, the apathy of the churches is, I conceive, mainly chargeable to the ministry. Like people, like priests. And what a responsibility does this fact impose on the members of our Theological Seminaries!! In how important a sense is the weal, or the wo, of Zion, in coming years, placed in their hands! Nor of Zion merely; for the best interests of our country & the world, we know, are dependent on her prosperity.

The Lord grant that the same mind which was in Xt. Jesus be also in us — in you — in the rising ministry in our country, and in all who love him in sincerity.

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Ans^d Decr 23 '44

To
the Committee on Foreign Missions,
Princeton Theol. Sem'y,
Princeton,
State of New Jersey
U.S.A.

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It will, as I have said, always afford me sincere pleasure to hear from you. Begging an affectionate remembrance to your revered instructors in which Mar Yohannan joins me

I am very truly yours,

J. Perkins